

Press Release January 2012

2014 National Curriculum to include new focus on Speech, Language and Communication

Free resource, Universally Speaking helps lead the way in the new curriculum review

Pearson Assessment welcomed the new National Curriculum Review Report and its recommendations for embedding speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) across all subjects, and not just English from 2014. This is an important step forward in ensuring the recognition of oral literacy and the importance of SLCN for young people.

The report, compiled by an expert panel review consisting of Mary James, Tim Oates (Chair), Andrew Pollard and Dylan William, foregrounds the “compelling body of evidence that highlights a connection between oral development, cognitive development and educational attainment.” and recommends “that the development of oral language should be a strong feature of any new National Curriculum.”

Significantly, the report also makes particular reference to *Universally Speaking* a resource developed by The Communication Trust, a 40-strong coalition of voluntary organisations with expertise in speech, language and communication and Pearson Assessment, the number one provider of speech and language assessments.

Universally Speaking: the ages and stages of children’s communication development are three free resources developed during the *Hello*, national year of communication campaign that provide guidance on what stage children and young people should be at with their speaking and listening. Aimed at practitioners working with children in early years (0-5), primary school (5-11) and secondary school (11-18) settings, each resource has been clearly laid out, enabling professionals to find out: whether the children they work with are on the right track, what helps them learn to talk and listen, and what to do if they have concerns about any of their communication abilities.

Commenting on the report, Chris Hall MD at Pearson Assessment says, “We were delighted to hear that the Expert Panel is recommending that speech, language and communication is fore grounded in the new curriculum from 2014. As the report states these skills are ‘strong predictors of school attainment’ and by embedding them across the board, we hope to see a new future of confident, young people who are given the opportunity to not only learn how to communicate, but are offered the support they need throughout their education to develop.”

“By referencing *Universally Speaking* the panel has also highlighted the fantastic work carried out during the national year of communication, work we see continuing into 2012. We shall be using our expertise in this area to help support professionals working to develop children and young people’s communication skills.”

A copy of The Framework for the National Curriculum can be downloaded from the Department for Education website: <http://www.education.gov.uk/publications>

Copies of the popular *Universally Speaking* can be downloaded from www.hello.org.uk/resources



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Notes for editors

About Pearson Assessment

- Pearson Assessment is the world's largest commercial developer and distributor of educational assessments and psychological testing materials with a 90 year history of commitment to researching and developing products to a reliable high standard.
- Pearson Assessment is the number one provider of speech and language assessments
- Pearson Assessment is dedicated to the pursuit of professional excellence, leadership, and growth through acquisition, development, publication, and the maintenance of quality assessment tools in order to anticipate and meet the needs of its customers.
- Pearson Assessment have sponsored the *Hello* campaign (national year of communication) in 2011.
- For more information, visit www.psychcorp.co.uk or follow @PsychCorpUK

About The Communication Trust

- The Communication Trust is a campaigning voice for children with speech, language and communication needs. It raises awareness, influences policy, promotes best practice among the children's workforce and commissions work from its members.
- It is a coalition of nearly 50 leading voluntary sector organisations and an advisory group, which includes the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists, Association of Educational Psychologists and the General Teaching Council.
- The Trust ran *Hello* the national year of communication – in conjunction with Jean Gross, the Government's Communication Champion for Children – aiming to make children's communication a priority in homes and schools across the UK. The Trust was one of the campaigning voices that secured the Bercow Review in 2008, which ultimately led to the year of communication.
- For more information about the Trust visit www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk or www.hello.org.uk